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**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

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Applicant: Nobuo Ichihashi et al.  
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Commissioner for Patents  
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**PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT**

Prior to examination of the above-identified application, please amend the application as follows:

**Amendments to the Claims** are reflected in the listing of claims which begins on page 2 of this paper.

**Remarks** begin on page 8 of this paper.